



Childhood Connections

June 4, 2024

Roads to Success

Throughout 2024, the Office of Childhood (OOC) will share “Roads to Success,” a collection of stories from professionals and higher education institutions. Stories from professionals feature achievements from people working in childhood programs such as home visiting, early intervention, child care, Head Start, preschool, and afterschool. Stories from higher education institutions highlight colleges and universities who are using innovative methods to support and grow the early childhood workforce. There are many roads to success. It is important to highlight the varying and unique pathways professionals take and how higher education programs can pave the way. These stories are also available at the bottom of the [Early Connections webpage](#).



Photo Credit: Kyleigh Brown

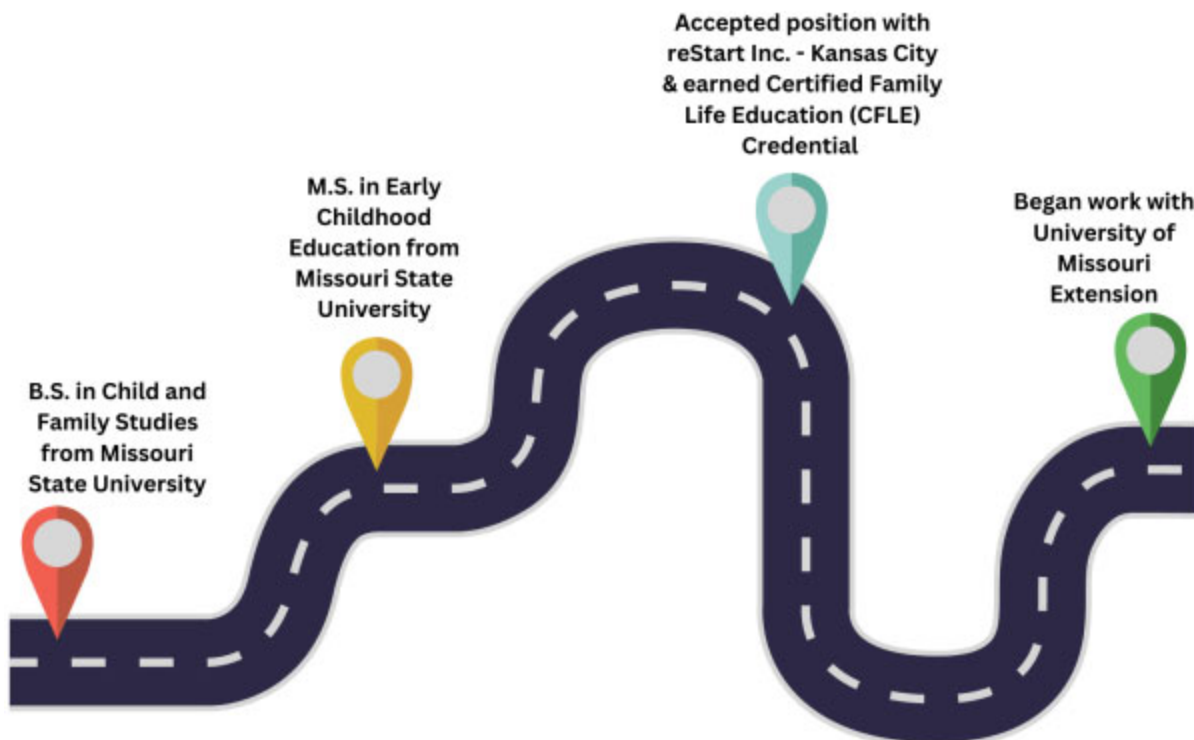
This month’s “Road to Success” focuses on Kyleigh Brown, a Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) with University of Missouri Extension. Kyleigh always knew she wanted to help people, but she didn’t know if the classroom was the right place for her. When she was looking at colleges, she discovered that Missouri State University offered a major in Child and Family Development.

She was able to earn her Bachelor of Science in Child and Family Studies after three and a half years in December of 2015. One semester later, she completed her master’s in early childhood education and Family Studies, in May 2016. Kyleigh was able to begin the process of applying for the Certified Family Life Educator credential because her degree was recognized by the National Council on Family Relations as a CFLE-approved program. This credential is awarded to candidates who demonstrate knowledge and experience in Family Life Education.

After graduation, Kyleigh accepted a position at reStart Inc. – Kansas City working as a Relationship Advocate in the Youth Program. Throughout her two and a half years, she gained experience providing guidance to youth on the intersection of housing instability and dating violence, safe relationships, and communication skills.

That experience helped her gain the work hours necessary to complete her Certified Family Life Educator Credential. She then transitioned to a new role with the University of Missouri Extension that would allow her to work with multiple age groups. In this job, Kyleigh is able to work with many people, including early childhood educators. She appreciates that this position allows her to reach young children through working with their teachers.

Here is what Kyleigh's road to success looks like!



ANNOUNCEMENT! One Year of MOPD



June 1, 2024, marks the 1st anniversary of the [Missouri Professional Development \(MOPD\) system](#), DESE's early childhood workforce registry and training system.

Watch for an email coming soon on steps to renew your registry profile membership, which is required on an annual basis. If you have not yet created a registry profile membership, go to this [MOPD webpage](#) at your earliest convenience.

OOC is working on an [Education Matrix](#) in the MOPD system that is based on the Selected Occupations Chart. Submitting qualifications in the MOPD system is optional but highly encouraged to determine the level attained on the Education Matrix.



REMINDER! Early Childhood State Advisory Council Meeting

The next meeting of the Early Childhood State Advisory Council (ECSAC) will be held on **Wednesday, July 17, 2024, at 12:30 p.m.**

The agenda is online now, and the other presentation materials will be posted on the [ECSAC meeting webpage](#) approximately one week before the meeting.

FINAL REMINDER! Preschool Start-Up Grants

A [Preschool Start-up Grant Administrative Memo](#) was disseminated

ANNOUNCEMENT! MOQPK Funding Opportunity

The next round of Missouri Quality Prekindergarten (MOQPK) Grants are available for eligible local education agencies (LEAs) and child care programs. Once House Bill 2002 for fiscal year 2025 is signed into law, which is expected by June 30, state funds will be available to awarded programs.

MOQPK grant recipients must meet the quality standards in statute ([161.213 RSMo](#)) and rule ([5 CSR 25 100-340](#)).

- Programs must serve children age 4 by July 31, 2024, and classrooms must include children who are at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty level.
- MOQPK funds allow the LEA to contract with another LEA or with a private entity to serve eligible Pre-K students.
- Learn more about these grants, including guidance and the application for funds, on the [MOQPK website](#).
- Deadline to apply is **June 20, 2024, at 11:59 p.m.**

For questions, contact the Office of Childhood at Preschool@dese.mo.gov or call 573-751-6793.

NEW! Homelessness Resources from Head Start

The Office of Head Start recently launched [A Call To Action](#), a short video series, and a virtual 3-day professional development opportunity, entitled Home At Head Start Institute 2024.

The Institute featured sessions from representatives of the Office of Head Start, specialists from Office of Head Start National Centers, and featured experts on housing instability in early childhood communities.

The goals of the institute included boosting the recruitment, enrollment, and retention of children and families experiencing homelessness. Goals also included strengthening community partnerships that address housing instability, ensuring families have access to all available supports and services, and refreshing the understanding of—and ability to apply—regulations related to homelessness.

Sessions were recorded and will be made available on the [Early Learning Knowledge Center](#).

to all local education agencies to announce a new funding opportunity for preschool programs.

The application closes on **June 30, 2024**, at 11:59 p.m.

NEW! Stakeholder Engagement Webpage

OOC has a new webpage recognizing the importance of stakeholder engagement and organizing a convenient place to find stakeholder materials.

[Visit the Stakeholder Engagement webpage to learn more.](#)

NEW! Teacher Appreciation Day at Silver Dollar City

Silver Dollar City is offering a special, discounted one-day ticket in June to Silver Dollar City and White Water to preschool teachers, teachers, principals, assistant principals, and supporting school staff (who verify their employment through ID.me), and up to three additional guests! Tickets can be purchased now at [Silver Dollar City](#). This is an online-only offer. The ticket is valid all operating days from June 2-30, 2024.

For more information, visit the [Silver Dollar City Teacher Appreciation](#) webpage.

REMINDER! Special Education Training

The [Missouri Children Experiencing Homelessness: Missouri Head Start Needs Assessment and Recommendations](#), provides information on how children experiencing homelessness are being served across Missouri Head Start programs.

It also gives information on the nature of partnerships with local education agencies, along with recommendations for improving partnerships which can lead to increased identification and enrollment.

NEW! Memorandum of Understanding and Collaboration Between DESE and Head Start

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Collaboration: A webinar was held on April 30, 2024, to review the [recent MOU](#) between the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the Missouri Head Start Collaboration Office (MHSCO), and the Missouri Head Start Association (MHSA). The [webinar recording](#) is available to review.

This [MOU](#) can be a supportive tool as agencies connect, engage in conversation, and advance relationship and partnership building to support positive outcomes for children.

If you have questions, please reach out to the contact applicable to your program:

- IDEA Part C (First Steps): earlyIntervention@dese.mo.gov
- IDEA Part B (ECSE): secompliance@dese.mo.gov
- Missouri Head Start: wrightst@missouri.edu

NEW! 2024 Invoice for Summer Camps

Programs designated as an approved summer camp per [210.201 RSMo](#). and contracted with the Child Care Subsidy Program can request reimbursement for subsidy-eligible children served between May 1 and September 1, 2024.

A new [Summer Camp Invoice](#) is available to assist with this payment for summer 2024. In future years, this information will be entered electronically in the child care data system.

REMINDER! Child Care Data System

Missouri Parents Act (MPACT) is Missouri's federally funded Parent Training and Information Center for families of children with special needs. MPACT works with agencies, parent groups and professional organizations with the goal of assisting parents in their effort to effectively advocate for their child's educational rights and services.

Visit the [MPACT training calendar](#) to learn about upcoming trainings.

REMINDER! MO-SECA Training Available

Child care providers can register for [MO-SECA](#), a program designed to provide training and assessment for child care administrators.

MO-SECA training dates are available through July 2024. For questions about registration, [contact MO-SECA](#) or call 314-558-6966.

REMINDER! Training Opportunities

Training dates for developmental screening and social emotional trainings are still available. Check out these flyers for more details and registration.

- [ASQ Training Flyer](#)
- [Second Steps Training Flyer](#)
- [Conscious Discipline for Child Care Providers](#)

There are still families receiving child care assistance who need to set up an account in CCDS or select their provider. OOC continues to email or mail reminders to families. You can help us by sharing this information with families in your community:

- **Log-in to the System.** Families who need to renew their eligibility for child care assistance must apply in CCDS before their benefit case expires. Use [this flyer for Existing Families](#) to connect to their historical information in CCDS.
- **Select a Child Care Provider.** Once the parent applies, use [this flyer for Selecting or Changing a Child Care Provider](#) to select a provider in the system before that provider can be authorized and paid for child care services.

Contact the child care call center at 573-415-8605 for assistance with logging in or using CCDS.

ANNOUNCEMENT! Conference on the Young Years Call for Proposals



OOC is now accepting presentation proposals for the Conference on the Young Years (CYY) 2025. The conference dates are March 6-8, 2025, at Tan Tar A Conference Center in Osage Beach, MO.

Our goal is to provide participants with the opportunity to discuss appropriate practices, share ideas, and receive developmental information on early childhood (Birth-third grade). All sessions should be one hour in length.

If selected the lead presenter and one co-presenter will receive complimentary registration. All other costs, including lodging, will be at the presenter's expense. The co-presenter must be listed on the proposal at the time of submission.

Please note that selling or promoting materials during the presentation is **strictly prohibited**. Presenters may rent a booth space in the exhibit hall for this purpose.

REMINDER! Home Visitors: Don't Forget Gun Safety

Home visitors, consider adding gun safety to your safety assessment.

Firearms are the leading cause of death for U.S. persons under 18. Gun safety decreases the risk of unintentional shootings, suicide, and homicide.

The Missouri Department of Social Services has produced a [firearm safety brochure](#) with more information about gun safety and children.

REMINDER! Missouri Family Resources Webpage and Mobile App

Missouri Family Resources is a statewide resource webpage and mobile app for professionals and families to access and share local early childhood information and services.

[Missouri Family Resources](#) is easy and intuitive to use and houses a variety of local resources for families with young children. It is accessible 24/7, and is free to use.

Learn about key features of Missouri Family Resources and how resources stay up-to-date, [in this Website User Tips document](#).

You can also download the Missouri Family Resources app from the

More information will be available on the [OOC CYY webpage](#).

Presentation Proposals must be submitted via electronic survey. To submit a proposal, use the link on the CYY webpage. The deadline to submit a proposal is July 1, 2024.

RESOURCE! STEM Activities for Infants and Toddlers



The federal Department of Education funded STEM Innovation for Inclusion in Early Education released [STEM exploration card sets](#) for use with infants and toddlers.

These cards provide families and providers who work with infants and toddlers with activity ideas to embed early science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) within everyday routines and activities. Each card has specific ideas for talking about STEM, information about the STEM learning area, and the developmental progression step for the activity.

Spotlight on Success

Spotlight on Success aims to share stories from local programs that are building community partnerships in order to strengthen and coordinate childhood programs.

Apple App Store or Google Play.

REMINDER! Imagination Library Registration is Open

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is now available for every child ages birth to 5 years in Missouri. A parent or guardian can register their child on the [Imagination Library national website](#). Books will be mailed directly to the home of registered children at no cost to the family.

Learn about Imagination Library enrollment in your area by [visiting our Imagination Library webpage](#).

REMINDER! Scholarships Available

T.E.A.C.H. MISSOURI scholarships are available to professionals working in licensed child care programs. To apply, you can [register at the Child Care Aware® of Missouri webpage](#).

For more information, email [Child Care Aware® of Missouri](#).

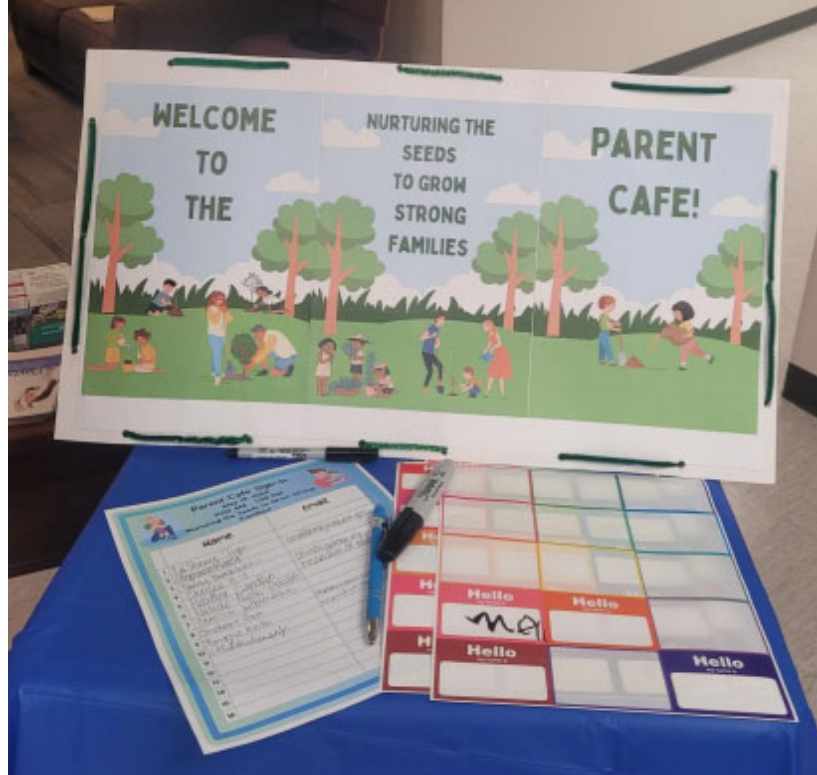


Photo Credit: St. Joseph Health Department

Organizations that serve young children in St. Joseph, including United Way Success by 6, Parents as Teachers (PAT), Easter Seals, Community Action Partnership (CAP), St. Joseph Public Library, St. Joseph Health Department, YWCA, St. Joseph Museums, and the St. Joseph Parks Department meet regularly to collaborate and identify where gaps may exist in services for young children.

During a recent meeting, the Easter Seals program shared their monthly parent cafés are very well-attended, but because Easter Seals serves multiple counties, they are only able to host a café in St. Joseph quarterly. This helped the organizations recognize the need for more frequent parent cafés to help increase parent engagement.

With a goal to make the cafés available to families monthly, the Health Department wrote a grant to pay for Be Strong Families to come to St. Joseph to train agency's staff in the Parent Café model. The Health Department purchased a parent café starter kit for each agency program. The staff from United Way, PAT, CAP, the Health Department, St. Joseph Youth Alliance, and the YWCA completed the training in September of 2023. The training included learning about the Five Protective Factors and the Parent Café Model Fidelity, as well as participating in a café led by trainers. Since completing the training, the organizations working together have held four parent cafes and two more are scheduled to take place in June.

Kay Smith, Health Educator at City of St. Joseph Health Department states "There were a lot of moments during the Parent Café training that I thought, these are some extremely resilient people here. It made sharing my story so much easier because everyone had been through tough times. There was no shame, only support and that is so important!"

UPDATE! Preschool Development Grant



The Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five (PDG B-5) provides funding over three years to coordinate a more effective, high-quality early childhood system that better prepares Missouri children for success.

Each month, the OOC hosts a live webinar to provide updates and information about the PDG B-5 to stakeholders. A [recording](#) and the [PowerPoint slides](#) from the May 2024 webinar are available in case you were unable to attend and wish to hear the information. You can view archived webinars here:

- [April 2024](#)
- [March 2024](#)
- [February 2024](#)
- [January 2024](#)
- [November 2023](#)
- [October 2023](#)

The [PDG B-5 dashboard](#) is also updated monthly. This dashboard provides an at-a-glance look at priority areas, budget status, and key accomplishments.

PDG B-5 Monthly Webinar

Join us for the next PDG B-5 Stakeholder webinar on **Monday, June 17, 2024**, from noon to 12:45 p.m. to learn more and ask questions. You can [access the webinar](#) in a Google Chrome or Safari web browser. Do not view in Internet Explorer. We hope you can participate!

For questions about the stakeholder webinar series, or suggestions for topics in future webinars, email us at Childhood@dese.mo.gov.

Archived Editions of Childhood Connections

[Visit the OOC webpage to find previous editions of Childhood Connections.](#)

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